



**EIGHTMILE RIVER**  
WILD & SCENIC WATERSHED

## **Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee (ERWSCC) Watershed Grant Application Guidance**

The Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee (ERWSCC) announces the availability of grants through its Watershed Grant Program. Grant amount will typically be made in the amounts of \$1,000 to \$7,500. The grants are intended to advance projects that support and enhance the protection and enjoyment of the Eightmile River Watershed's Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs). Funding for this Grant Program is through annual Cooperative Agreements between the National Park Service and ERWSCC (Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc. serves as ERWSCC's fiscal agent)

### **Background:**

In 2008, the Eightmile River was the twelfth river to be designated as a Partnership Wild & Scenic River by the United States Congress. It was designated due to its six Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs), which include;

- **Watershed Hydrology**-a natural intact flow regime well below the thresholds for degradation
- **Water Quality**– biological indicators show excellent water quality with few sources for degradation and a mostly intact riparian corridor.
- **Geology**-locally and regionally significant geologic features
- **Unique Species and Natural Communities**-studies for rare species (regional, national and global), biodiversity and ecological communities indicate the watershed is in the top tier for the New England region
- **Intact Watershed Ecosystem**-considered to be the most outstanding characteristic of the Eightmile is the intact, high quality ecosystem present throughout the entire watershed
- **Cultural Landscape**-a rural watershed with winding scenic roads, historic settlements and a bucolic landscape

Recognizing the unanimous support for designation by the town governments, local conservation, other organizations and the public, and the important role they play in the protection of river resources, the goal of this grant program is to support activities that enhance and protect the Eightmile River Watershed. Additional information about the ORVs, threats and goals can be found in the Watershed Management Plan.

### **Who may apply:**

Eligible entities include community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations such as historical societies, garden clubs, art associations, churches, local land trusts, scouts, Audubon, CT, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Districts and municipal boards and departments, including but not limited to conservation commissions, planning boards, water/wastewater departments, libraries, historical commissions, recreation departments, schools (including environmental clubs, art programs, science classes, etc.). Other groups that are not qualified non-profit organizations and individuals that are interested in applying should partner with either a town board or department or 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization(s).

ERWSCC will consider applications from nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations outside the Eightmile Watershed Communities (Salem, East Haddam, Lyme, Colchester, and East Lyme), when the project directly benefits the Eightmile River Watershed. Project proposals must clearly explain this connection.

Previously funded entities may apply again with a different project, or one that takes previously funded work to the next level. Performance on a previous grant will be weighed in decision making, as will the applicant's ability to apply insight from previous evaluation efforts.

## **Priorities for Funding:**

Priorities are based on Tier One Tools as outlined in the Watershed Management Plan. The Plan can be further reviewed using this link: [www.eightmileriver.org/watershed-management-plan/](http://www.eightmileriver.org/watershed-management-plan/)

1. Activities related to the protection and management of preserved lands including, but not limited to appraisals, legal fees, surveying and development and implementation of stewardship plans.
2. Research studies, resource mapping, including GIS and other technical services, that results in better natural resource management of the Outstanding Resource Values including water supplies, headwater tributaries, species of concern, climate resiliency, impervious surfaces, areas of geological significance and historical and archeological sites.
3. Public education, workshops and outreach, including development and use of social media and fine arts, about the watershed and its resources and values, for youth and/or adults.
4. Preserved lands management activities such as removal of invasive species, plantings and habitat enhancement and trail marking and signage.
5. Professional workshops, field training, development and certification that address implementation of best management practices and state guidelines including but not limited to CT Erosion and Sediment Guidelines, Stormwater Manual, Low Impact Development, Climate Resiliency, Stream Crossings and Habitat Management.
6. Mapping, inventory and targeted outreach for conservation efforts including, but not limited to flora and fauna species, especially species and habitats that are critical to the health and diversity of the watershed or that may be threatened.
7. Projects that further identify and/or protect historical and archeological and geological resources in the watershed.
8. Projects that address non-point source (stormwater) water quality concerns. This could include, but is not limited to rain gardens, biofilters, riparian vegetated buffers and restoration projects, slope stabilization, increased riparian shading and installation of pervious surfaces.
9. Development of municipal regulations, planning documents and ordinances that addresses resource protection, especially with regards to the Outstanding Resource Values of the Eightmile River Watershed.

## **Process, Restrictions and Timeframes:**

Interested parties are highly encouraged to contact ERWSCC prior to starting the application process to confirm their eligibility and the appropriateness of the Watershed Grant Program for their project. The application can be found at <https://www.eightmileriver.org/community-grant-program/>.

- The Watershed Grant Application must be completed on-line and include the authorized representative's signature and emailed to [info@eightmileriver.org](mailto:info@eightmileriver.org) unless instructed otherwise.
- Letters of support may be submitted but are not required.
- Grant requests can be made in the range of **\$1000** to **\$7,500**. Projects which impact the majority or entire watershed may be requested for amounts up to **\$15,000**. ERWSCC may be in a position to offer additional funding in certain circumstances.
- Multi-year projects may be considered depending on availability of funds.
- A one to one match is encouraged and may consist of either cash or in-kind services.
- Watershed Grant Program funds are not eligible as match for other federal grant programs.

- Funding may not be used for federally mandated activities or to address violation enforcement requirements or mitigation. Funding may also not be used for entertainment, lobbying, illegal activities or any other restrictions associated with federal fund use (reference NPS).
- Funding is generally by reimbursement upon submittal of an expense reimbursement form and report of work accomplished. Advance funding may be requested for the purchase of supplies or required deposits.
- Applications will be accepted **six weeks** ahead of a regularly scheduled bimonthly meeting (the Board typically meets every other month on the fourth Monday of the month. Please check the website <https://www.eightmileriver.org/meetings/> or call 860.615.6929 for meeting dates). Applicants may be asked to attend a meeting for further explanation and/or be asked to supply additional information.
- Decisions will generally be made within 30 days after the meeting or upon receipt of additional requested information. Applicants will be notified by email.
- Decisions to fund a project will be based on how well the project meets the **Review Criteria** (listed below) and **Priorities for Funding** (see above) and on available funds. ERWSCC reserves the right to offer partial funding.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be signed by both parties (applicant and ERWSCC) prior to project initiation and dispersing of funds.
- ERWSCC may consider reimbursements for projects and or services that have already been completed within **two** months prior to application due to third party time frames. (i.e., appraisal services for land acquisition grants)

### **Decision Review Criteria:**

The merits of a particular project will be reviewed according to the following criteria. Projects do not need to meet all these criteria to be eligible; however, stronger proposals will be those that address multiple of the following: For this section “project” also includes programs, outreach, reports and professional training.

#### Impact:

- Wild and Scenic mission: The degree to which the proposed project protects, enhances, or promotes appreciation of one or more of the rivers’ Outstanding Resource Values.
- Stewardship: Does the proposed project strengthen relationships among towns, non-profit organizations, community groups, and/or the public to enhance local stewardship?
- Awareness: Does the proposed project raise public awareness about the rivers or watershed resources?
- Long-term benefits: Are results of the proposed project sustainable after completion of the grant? (Is it explained how?) Will future activities/decisions at the community, municipal, regional, or state level build on the results of the proposed project?

#### Implementation:

- Administrative capability: Can the proposed project be completed with the funding available and the timeline proposed? Is there demonstrated ability to complete similar work?
- Measurable Results: Does the applicant have a plan to evaluate the effectiveness and impact (relative to the project goals)?
- Reasonableness of cost: Do the associated costs of the project seem reasonable with regard to scope and impact?
- ERWSCC Funding Impact: Is the ERWSCC funding significant to project implementation? Will the project happen without ERWSCC funding? Is ERWSCC funding leveraged for other funding requests?

## Guidance for Application Questions 1-11

Please note that there is additional guidance for land stewardship applications involving the removal of invasive species on page 6.

1. Project Location: If the request involves a project on or for a property(ies), please include address or GPS coordinates (latitude, longitude) (if no address). Please attach a map of location(s). If project is for a program, please include name and location. If project/program involves whole town or watershed, please state that.
2. Project Description: Please include a short description (1-2 paragraphs) of the project/program, including purpose and benefits or goals.
3. Project Deliverables: Please list and describe anticipated project deliverables (some examples: informational signs along trail, professional training for land-use board members, streamside revegetation, targeted outreach to specific audiences and resource mapping)
4. Addressing Funding Priorities: Refer to pg. 2 in this document, Priorities for Funding
5. Amount Requested: Please include the amount of funds being requested under this grant. If the funds will cover more than one item (for example, mapping and signage), please include an amount for each. This will be helpful if partial funding needs to be considered.
6. Cost Breakdown: Insert a table with details including amount requested and match. See sample below. For match, please include both cash (for example, paid staff time, paid consultants, room rental or other purchases that are part of the project paid from other sources) and in-kind match (for example, value of volunteer hours, room or equipment time donation, reduced professional rates and donated supplies) If other funds have been applied for or donations will be sought, please include in no. 7.

### Sample Budget

Item/Task/Organization or Partner Contribution	Total Amount (funds requested + match)	Funds Request	Match Provided
Native Plants, pollinator and wetland friendly, \$10 each x 45	\$450.00	\$150.00	\$300.00
Other materials, straw, stakes, cement	\$50.00	0	\$50.00
Graphic Design of Informational sign	\$350.00	\$350.00	0
18" x 24" Exterior Laminated Sign and Pedestal	\$500.00	\$150.00	\$350.00
Outreach materials including a poster board (\$50) and 250 informational flyers for use at events (\$1.20 each)	\$350.00	\$350.00	0
On-Site Planting and Installation 10 volunteers X 5 hrs avg each X \$34.56* (Master Gardeners and Watershed Volunteers)	\$1,464.50	0	\$1,464.50
Project Coordination-Watershed Coordinator 10hrs x \$34.00/hr	\$340.00	0	\$340.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$3,504.50</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,504.50</b>

\*2023 Independent Sector Rate reported for a volunteer in CT

7. Other Funding Sources: List any other funds being applied for or sought as part of this project.

8. Meeting Review Criteria: Refer to pg. 4 & 5 of this document, *Decision Review Criteria*

9. Beginning and Ending Project Dates: Please include project beginning date and when project is anticipated to be completed.

10. Other Groups Participating and Anticipated Numbers of Participants: Please include if applicable, other groups that are participating and projected numbers of participants.

11. Anything Else: Please include up to 1-2 paragraphs of any additional information that may be helpful to explain the project if applicable.

**Applicants are encouraged to contact ERWSCC to discuss the proposal ahead of filing an application.**

**By Email: [info@eightmileriver.org](mailto:info@eightmileriver.org)**

**By Phone: (860) 615-6929**

## Guidance on Stewardship Grants:

ERWSCC recognizes that properties that have been preserved require on-going management and maintenance activities. These activities may include the control of non-native invasive species and ERWSCC's community grant funding may be able to contribute toward the costs of stewardship. In addition, privately held property owners working with a non-profit organization to collectively manage non-native invasive species may also be eligible for funding.

Due to their ability to outcompete native species, invasive non-native species can result in complete alteration of native habitats, including sensitive habitats and species of high conservation value. Invasive non-native species may also be associated with an increased risk of vector-borne disease, such as in the case of ticks carrying Lyme disease. Effective control of non-native invasive plant species requires a well thought out multi-year plan that embraces an integrated approach and includes efforts to restore native habitats.

ERWSCC has limited funding and wants to ensure that funds are used for priority projects and those that have a lasting impact.

**Please Note: ERWSCC may choose to not fund a project or provide limited funding based on; (a) concerns with components of a proposal, (b) location relative to neighboring properties and potential impacts, (c) past performance on a grant, (d) where there is no clear plan for long-term invasive species control and restoration, (e) the grant request does not address items 1-7 listed below, or (f) that funds are needed or put to better use elsewhere.**

Any application seeking funding from ERWSCC for the removal of non-native invasive species should address the following:

1. A plan should be prepared that includes identification, extent, and density of any and all the non-native invasive species to be targeted and include planned areas of removal.
2. The plan should identify the conservation targets and management goals and include information on the natural ability of the site for recolonization or steps needed for native plant replanting and how that will be accomplished.
3. The plan should describe the multi-year approach being proposed and the organization's ability to provide continued stewardship.
4. The plan should include a description of removal methods proposed. Methods should include an integrated approach that selects the least intrusive method to reduce the reliance on chemical treatments. Methods should minimize negative impacts to other native species and habitats, limit the introduction or spread of other non-native invasive plants and restrict physical impacts such as soil compaction. Any method proposed should clearly describe how environmental damage will be minimized.
5. Any proposal for funding that includes the use of chemicals should also address the following;
  - a. Application by a licensed applicator, with all the appropriate permits
  - b. How the plan minimizes broad application product usage in favor of targeted application methods such as cut stem treatments, stem injections, and basal treatments or other appropriate applications.
  - c. How the timing of the product application coincides with the season when targeted plants are most vulnerable to herbicide applications in order to increase the efficacy of treatments and reduce the need for follow up applications. It should include under what weather conditions the product application should be applied to reduce the risk of herbicide spray drift and/or off-site run-off
  - d. Products used should be low toxicity herbicides. These herbicides are primarily labeled with a "caution" label rather than a "warning" or "danger" label.

- e. Methods proposed must not negatively impact the Outstanding Resource Values of the Eightmile River.
6. All landowners, or their representatives whose property will have work performed on it, including the use of any chemicals, must give their permission.
7. ERWSCC puts a high value on neighbor communication and encourages all applicants to reach out to surrounding landowners that may be within close proximity (300') to explain what stewardship activities are being proposed and timing of such. This communication does not replace any required by other regulatory permitting.

*Approved on May 20, 2024, by vote of the ERWSCC*

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